

# Assemblyman **PAUL KORETZ**

## **Forty-second Assembly District**

*proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **KORETZ URGES FDA BAN OF NONOXYNOL-9 IN CONDOMS DUE TO INCREASED RISK OF HIV INFECTION**

**(Sacramento)** Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) has introduced Assembly Joint Resolution 16 urging the federal Food and Drug Administration to ban the spermicidal additive Nonoxynol-9 (N-9) from condoms and sexual lubricants. Until recently, N-9 was believed to be an effective chemical barrier against HIV and a variety of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, recent studies by the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have concluded that Nonoxynol-9 not only does not help prevent STIs, it actually increases the risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

“America’s three largest condom brands, Trojan, Lifestyles, and Durex, have refused to remove Nonoxynol-9 from their products despite scientific evidence that N-9 increases the risk of HIV and other infections,” said Assemblyman Koretz. “To protect public health, I urge the FDA to ban the sale of condoms and sexual lubricants with the additive N-9. I also call on manufacturers to stop producing N-9 condoms and ask retailers to stop selling these harmful products,” continued Mr. Koretz.

Researchers have reported that N-9 irritates the internal surfaces of the body and facilitates the risk of infections from a virus or other infective organisms. Studies show that introducing N-9 into the body may result in vaginal lesions and urinary tract infections in addition to increasing the risk of HIV transmission. Oakland based Mayer Laboratories, the number four condom maker, pledged last September to remove N-9 from its lubricant and condom brands which include Maxx, Kimono, and Aqua Lube.

Nonoxynol-9 is also the active ingredient in every spermicide sold in the U.S. and is used by 4.6% of women using a contraceptive method. The WHO has advised women at high risk of HIV infection not to use N-9 products. However, for other lower risk women who are unable to use birth control pills, N-9 spermicides, used in conjunction with other contraceptive devices, may be the best choice currently available. AJR 16 calls for the preservation of N-9 spermicides as an important contraceptive option for women until a safer spermicide is developed.

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However, the WHO has concluded that condoms packaged with N-9 additives offer no more protection against pregnancy or infections than plain silicon lubricated condoms, and stated that “since adverse effects due to the addition of N-9 to condoms cannot be excluded, such condoms should no longer be promoted.”

“There is no proof that N-9 offers any benefit in condoms or lubricants, but there is evidence of potential harm. Therefore, N-9 should be removed from condoms and lubricants,” said Dr. Nancy Padian, a Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at UCSF and Director of International Research at the UCSF AIDS Research Institute. Dr. Padian was part of the team of experts that reviewed existing studies of N-9 and developed the World Health Organization recommendations regarding N-9 use.

Throughout the 1990’s HIV prevention messages encouraged the use of condoms and lubricants containing N-9. Now public health officials and HIV prevention advocates face the difficult task of reversing ten years of safe sex education efforts. AJR 16 is sponsored by the Southern California HIV/AIDS Advocacy Coalition (SCHAC), a group of AIDS service providers and HIV positive individuals who advocate for sound HIV public policy.

"HIV prevention is difficult work that requires a simple, consistent message to have maximum impact. Removing N-9 condoms from the marketplace will reduce confusion among condom users and will reduce the risk of HIV transmission that is associated with N-9," said Tom Peterson, Co-Chair of SCHAC.

“Protecting public health is our most important responsibility as elected officials. Today, I ask my colleagues in the Legislature to support AJR 16 as an expression of health policy and health education,” said Paul Koretz.

Mr. Koretz is a member of the Assembly Health Committee and has been a legislative leader in HIV/AIDS issues. Last year Koretz successfully authored AB 2197, a bill that expanded Medi-Cal coverage to HIV-positive, non-disabled individuals. AJR 16 will be referred to the Assembly Health Committee.

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